



THE ASSEMBLY
STATE OF NEW YORK
ALBANY

DARRYL C. TOWNS
Assemblyman 54th District
Kings County

□ DISTRICT OFFICE:
840 Jamaica Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11208
(718) 235-5627
FAX (718) 235-5966

□ ALBANY OFFICE:
Room 626
Legislative Office Building
Albany, New York 12248
(518) 455-5821
FAX (518) 455-5591

CHAIR
Small Business

COMMITTEES
Banks
Children & Families
Health
Mental Health
Oversight, Analysis & Investigation
Transportation
Veterans Affairs
Economic Development

MEMBER
Puerto Rican/Hispanic Task Force

FIRST VICE CHAIR
Black, Puerto Rican & Hispanic
Legislative Caucus

July 7, 2004

Michael K. Powell
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20554

MB Docket No. 04-207

Dear Chairman Powell:

I am writing to urge you to not support the "a la carte" cable system currently being debated in Congress. Its implementation would reduce or eliminate programming aimed at minority groups.

Channels like BET, Telemundo, TV One and ESPN Deportes have succeeded under the current cable system in large part due to the way in which they were introduced: through bundling. When a new network is introduced, it is usually placed in a bundle with existing ad-supported popular channels, such as CNN, ESPN or Nickelodeon, allowing viewers the opportunity to try out the new channel. If consumers find the channels interesting, the channel will gain its own audience and enough advertising revenue to become profitable.

Under the "a la carte" system, where viewers pay separately for each channel, there is little likelihood that consumers will spend their money on channels about which they have little knowledge. A new network will have no opportunity to build an audience and become successful. This will also result in higher expenses for channels that remain.

Thus, the channels that appeal to more specialized audiences, particularly ethnic, foreign-language and niche programming, would have trouble attracting enough subscribers to survive. Ultimately, this situation would result in generic and low quality programming aimed at the majority. The minority voice would be silenced in the "a la carte" system.

I implore you to reject the "a la carte" system. Help keep diverse programming on the air.

Sincerely,

Darryl C. Towns
Member of Assembly